THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) to (g). The Government have constituted a Committee comprising one member of Parliament from each of the 7 States in North East and Sikkim, representatives of private airlines, Indian Airlines, Alliance Air, Chairman, Airports Authority of India and Director General of Civil Aviation as convenor to review the operation of air transport service in the North East and suggest improvement in the airports of the region, which is a continuous process. Two meetings of the Committee have already been held on 4.10.96 and 14.12.96 respectively.

Welfare for Cashew Labourers

4135. SHRI N.K. PREMCHANDRAN : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) what are the welfare measures undertaken by the Government for the development of cashew labourers at present;

(b) whether the Government propose to undertake any new welfare measures such as provision of House Building advance, Educational Assistance, and any other family welfare activities etc. for cashew labourers; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) to (c). The cashew labourers fulfilling the prescribed conditions get the benefits under the Employees State Insurance and the Provident Fund Acts. However, there is now new proposal before the Government for provision of House Building Advance, Educational Assistance etc. for the welfare of the cashew labourers.

Attachment of Coaches with Long Distance Trains

4136 SHRI RUP CHAND MURMU : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of the demand to attach AC-3 coaches with all long distance trains;

(b) if so, whether the Government are considering to fulfil this demand;

(c) whether the Government also considering to provide bedrolls to the passengers of AC-3 coaches free of costs;

(d) if so, the steps taken in this regard; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) AC-3 tier coaches are being deployed on Air brake long distance Mail/Express trains involving night journey in a phased manner and so far 46 pairs of these trains (including Rajdhanis) have been provided with this accommodation.

(c) No, Sir., except on Rajdhani Express where it is already being provided without collection of any charges.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Many passengers may not like to avail this facility and because provision of bedrolls to all passengers may require enhancement of fare.

Introduction of Superfast Train between Solapur and Bombay

4137. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that traffic between Solapur and Bombay, both ways, has increased manifold since Sidheshwar Express was introduced over twenty years ago;

(b) if so, whether the Government propose to introduce another superfast train between Solapur and Bombay;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the reasons for the delay in introduction of the said superfast train?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (d). At present 14 pairs of trains including 1023/1024 Sidheshwar Express are running from Mumbai and passing through Solapur. The reserved accommodation available by Sidheshwar Express is not being fully utilised. As the existing trains are adequate to cater to the present traffic, there is no commercial justification to run an additional train between Mumbai and Solapur.

Sidheshwar Express was introduced over twenty years ago. Details of traffic offered at the time of introduction of Sidheshwar Express are not available.

Sending of Labourers Abroad

4138. SHRI SOUMYA RANJAN : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have entered into agreements with some countries recently for sending labourers abroad;

(b) if so, whether provisions have also been made in the agreements with regard to wages and other facilities to be provided to labourers; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the names of the places where these labours are proposed to be sent?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.